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Report of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its forty-first session (see E/2010/24, chap. I.A), the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century on statistical capacity-building, which is submitted to the Commission for information. The report outlines the efforts of the Partnership to promote the use of better statistics as a central part of the enabling environment for development progress, in particular through support to countries in the design, implementation and monitoring of national strategies for the development of statistics. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2011/1.

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Report of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century on statistical capacity-building

I. Introduction

1. The overall goal of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) is to develop a culture of management for development results. The PARIS21 secretariat focuses its efforts on supporting developing countries in the design, implementation and monitoring of national strategies for the development of statistics in order to ensure, inter alia, nationally owned and produced data for all Millennium Development Goal indicators and development policy needs.[1]

II. Progress of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century in 2010

2. The PARIS21 secretariat supports national strategy processes primarily through the following activities: (a) facilitating the coordination of stakeholders to better address an evolving agenda; (b) advocating for increased involvement of national stakeholders in statistical development and enhancing the status of statistics in major international initiatives; (c) promoting better quality and effectively implemented national strategies; and (d) stimulating increased demand for and better use of data. Progress made in 2010 under these components is provided below.

A. Coordination

3. Since 2008, PARIS21 has conducted an annual exercise, the Partner Report on Support to Statistics, which gathers information from financial and technical partners on their support for statistical development. It is important to recognize the limitations of these data for the following reasons: not all donor support is captured in these exercises (especially where it is embedded in a broader sector programme), commitments are often estimated by dividing a project amount evenly across the project period, and double-counting is filtered out as much as possible but may still occur.

4. From the 2010 round of the Partner Report on Support to Statistics, covering active support for the period from 2008 to 2010, the following points emerged:[2]

- Africa received nearly half of the total support in terms of commitments. From 2008 to 2010, African countries and regional bodies received $716 million in commitments (45 per cent of global totals), while Asia received $488 million (31 per cent), Latin America and the Caribbean $135 million (8 per cent), and Europe $107 million (7 per cent). A further $151 million (9 per cent) was committed to global, non-country-specific projects and programmes.

[1] For a more detailed discussion of national strategies for the development of statistics, see E/CN.3/2005/18.

[2] Details and results available from www.paris21.org/PRESS2010/.

- Fifteen countries (Afghanistan, Albania, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan, Ukraine and United Republic of Tanzania) had estimated commitments exceeding $19.5 million per country. They combined to equal 45 per cent of total estimated commitments and 48 per cent of total country-specific commitments.

- Three donors (the European Commission, World Bank and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) provided 62 per cent of total commitments. Bilateral donors provided 37 per cent of all commitments, regional institutions 8 per cent, and international organizations 55 per cent.

- Commitments are considerably fragmented: more than one third of aid relationships in statistics (among the same 15 countries cited above) accounted for less than one twentieth of the financial aid committed to their statistical systems.

- Since the initial round of the Partner Report on Support to Statistics in 2008, global estimated commitments have risen by nearly 60 per cent (from approximately $1 billion to more than $1.6 billion in the 2010 round), although this increase may be due to a better response rate of donors.

- Since the 2008 round, the distribution of aid commitments to statistics seems to be shifting away from Africa. While the African continent remains the region with the highest proportion of commitments by far (45 per cent of global totals in 2010), its share has decreased steadily from the 2009 round (52 per cent) and 2008 round (59 per cent). This change has primarily been to the benefit of Asia, whose share has risen from 15 per cent in the 2008 round to 17 per cent in the 2009 round and to 31 per cent in the present round. The share for other regions has remained more or less level.

5. In accordance with the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action, and the Statistics for Results Facility, PARIS21 also supports country efforts in establishing national partnerships of stakeholders on statistics. The national partnership is intended to facilitate a better alignment of donor support for the national strategy implementation plan, increased mobilization of resources at the country level and use of more efficient and better coordinated funding arrangements for statistical development activities. The promotion and facilitation of such partnerships is an essential element of all missions to countries undertaken by the PARIS21 secretariat.

B. Advocacy

6. Among its 2010 advocacy activities, PARIS21 supported 17 countries throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America in producing booklets promoting their national statistical system and strategic planning processes and in organizing advocacy seminars or donor round tables. These countries are: Benin, Burundi, Cape Verde, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Papua New Guinea, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe. In addition, a regional booklet was produced in collaboration with the Andean Community secretariat. PARIS21 also delivered advocacy messages at relevant international and regional events.

C. National Strategies for the Development of Statistics

7. In 2010, PARIS21 organized the Meeting on Strategic Planning in Statistical Development for Fragile and Post-Conflict States in the margins of the forty-first session of the Statistical Commission and a regional workshop on national strategies in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community for Pacific island countries and territories. The Partnership secretariat directly supported the following 33 countries in national strategy processes (including mainstreaming agricultural statistical development in three countries), in conducting peer reviews and in preparing for participation at donor round tables: Benin, Bhutan, Burundi, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Mauritania, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Uganda, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe. The Partnership secretariat also supported three regional entities in designing a regional statistical strategy: the East African Community, the Central American Economic and Social Community and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States.

8. In November 2010, PARIS21 produced a report on progress in designing and implementing national strategies in International Development Association borrower countries, lower-middle-income countries and all African countries.[3] The report reveals the following:

- Of the 79 International Development Association borrowers, 28 are currently designing or awaiting Government adoption of their national strategies. A further 35 are implementing their strategies. A total of 80 per cent are therefore currently engaged in a national strategy process. In Africa, 36 of the 40 countries on the continent are designing or implementing a statistical strategy.
- Of the 38 lower-middle-income countries and remaining African nations, 29 are designing or implementing strategies. Combining International Development Association and lower-middle-income countries, 79 per cent are therefore engaged in a national strategy process. A further 14 countries (12 per cent) either have no strategy or an expired one but are planning to design a national strategy.
- Of the 117 countries covered by the report, only 11 (9 per cent) are without a strategy and are not currently planning one. Most of these countries are the most vulnerable and include those in conflict situations or small island developing States.

D. Knowledge for statistics

9. The Partnership secretariat continues to co-manage and implement with the World Bank and other partners two key statistical programmes: the International Household Survey Network (www.ihsn.org) and the Accelerated Data Program (www.ihsn.org/adp).[4] Both have been very successful in improving data

[3] The progress report is available from www.paris21.org/nsds-status.

[4] For more information, see E/CN.3/2007/25.

archiving/dissemination and harmonizing survey programmes. The tools and methodologies that these two programmes offer to the Partnership have been instrumental in stimulating increased demand for and better use of data.

10. In 2010, the Accelerated Data Program provided technical and financial support in microdata documentation, archiving and dissemination in Palestine and the following 53 countries: Argentina, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Jordan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Viet Nam and Zambia.

11. Sustainable capacity has been built in several countries that have considerably improved their microdata management practices and client orientation. The Economic and Statistical Observatory of Sub-Saharan Africa, the African Development Bank and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community are contributing to the implementation of the Accelerated Data Program in several countries. The Accelerated Data Program is also supporting a few countries in the assessment of survey data quality and harmonization/improvement of survey methods. Following pilot work undertaken in Cameroon with the Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and in Nigeria with the World Health Organization/United Nations Children's Fund Joint Monitoring Programme, the Accelerated Data Program is providing a more comprehensive approach in the establishment of national question banks in Cameroon and Ethiopia. Additional countries will likely join as demand for this type of activity is high.

12. In 2010, the activities of the International Household Survey Network have focused on: (a) the development and support of microdata management tools (software) and guidelines such as the Microdata Management Toolkit, Survey Management Toolkit, National Data Archive application, microdata anonymization tools, and question bank applications; and (b) the development of standards and guidelines such as the Data Documentation Initiative metadata standard, guidelines on question bank content, guidelines on the long-term preservation of digital data and metadata, a working paper on "The struggle for integration and harmonization", a working paper on "The Canada data liberation initiative", and guidelines on microdata dissemination policy. The International Household Survey Network tools and guidelines will continue to be updated and improved to respond to an ever growing demand.

III. Future directions of the Partnership's work

13. In addition to helping implement and monitor the Dakar Declaration on the Development of Statistics,[5] in 2011, PARIS21 will help to organize regional meetings and workshops, including the Fifth Forum on Statistical Capacity Building

[5] For more information on the Dakar Declaration for the Development of Statistics, see E/CN.3/2010/29.

for Arab Countries (Beirut, May 2011) and advocacy workshops for the Southern African Development Community, South-East Asia and Andean Community regions. PARIS21 will update the national strategy guidelines, enriching them with experiences gained in recent years. In order to better mainstream sectoral concerns in national strategies, the Partnership and UNESCO will also provide specific additional support in the development of education statistics to a number of African pilot countries. Support to country-level national strategies and regional-level activities will continue, and PARIS21 will conduct the 2011 round of the Partner Report on Support to Statistics.